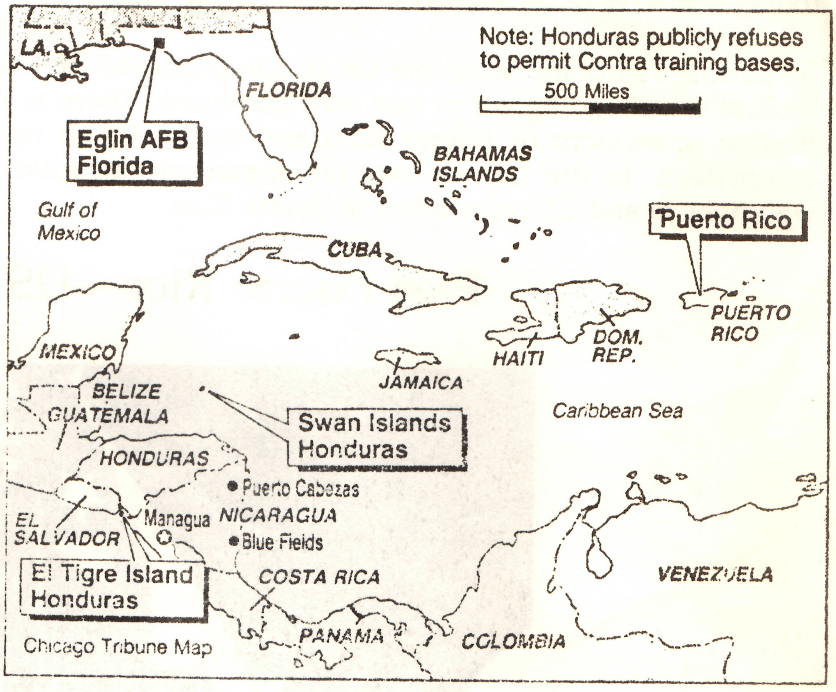
PUERTO RICO: KEY TO US AGGRESSION IN CENTRAL AMERICA

"Puerto Rico has a vital defense role in the Caribbean and is irreplaceable to the United States. Whoever controls the Caribbean controls access to the United States":

US Admiral William O'Connor
New York Times, Oct. 20., 1986

"Puerto Rico could become the Achilles Heel of the US":

William Webster
former director of the FBI;
appointed director of the CIA



Puerto Ricans have been struggling since the US military occupied Puerto Rico in 1898 to free themselves from US colonialism. United States colonialism in Puerto Rico means:

—13% of the land is occupied by United States military bases
— US war games practice invasions of Central America and the Caribbean in Puerto Rico
—pollution from US industries destroys the water, air and land of Puerto Rico
—45% unemployment
—40% of Puerto Rican women are sterilized in a deliberate US strategy to depopulate the island

Naturally, the Puerto Rican people refuse to accept the militarization and destruction of their island. In October, 1986, when President Reagan announced he was considering training contras in Puerto Rico (without consulting the Puerto Rican government) and US forest companies announced they planned to deforest 20% of Puerto Rico's National Rain Forest, El Yunque,the Puerto Rican people responded.

The Macheteros, an armed clandestine group fighting for Puerto Rican independence, bombed nine US military bases and recruitment centers in Puerto Rico. They warned that, "They will not cut a single tree of our El Yunque." A demonstration of 5,000 marched up into El Yunque, opposing the deforestation.Within days of the bombing, Puerto Rico's governor announced it would be a bad idea to train the contras in Puerto Rico-on the grounds that 99% of the Puerto Rican people opposed it.

In Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico, fishermen are organizing to stop the construction of a Voice of America transmitter which would send US propaganda to Latin America. In Vieques, an island off the coast of Puerto Rico,where the"Solid Shield" exercises are planned, Puerto Ricans oppose US navy bombing of their island.

Half the Puerto Rican nation has been forced to migrate to the US because US colonialism has

destroyed the Puerto Rican economy. But Puerto Ricans' strong sense of nationalism, along with unemployment, poor housing, police brutality, and racism they face here, have converted Puerto Ricans into a strong force for independence.

It is the independence movement, born here and on the island, which represents the biggest obstacle to US plans for Puerto Rico. Independence is the only alternative to prevent the military and industrial destruction of Puerto Rico by the US. As support for the independence movement grows, we North Americans who live in the colonizing nation have an important role to play. When 16 independentistas were arrested in Gestapo like raid and accused of being members of the Macheteros, hundreds of Puerto Ricans protested here and on the island. A 1986 poll in Puerto Rico found that 47% of all Puerto Ricans view the Macheteros not as criminals but as patriots.

As people who see what the US is doing around the world and oppose its aggression, we need to look at what's going on in our own backyard. There is a growing mass movement and armed clandestine movement in Puerto Rico and in the US to oppose militarism, sterilization, pollution and colonialism. In the US we have the opportunity to build a firm and consistent solidarity with all those who fight to end US colonialism in Puerto Rico.

Free Puerto Rico—US Military Out!

The New Movement in Solidarity with Puerto Rican Independence and Socialism is a national organization that works to develop understanding and support for the struggle of the Puerto Rican people—invaded and seized by the US military in 1898—to liberate their nation and to establish an independent socialist society. We have written material, slide and film programs on such topics as the 2020 Plan, the history of Puerto Rico and the independence movement. A new video entitled, "Have you Seen La Nueva Mujer Puertorriqueña," is now available. Please write or call the chapter nearest you to obtain an audiovisual brochure, or to set up a program and discussion.

Chicago—Box 295, 2520 N. Lincoln, Chicago, IL 60614 (312) 278-6706
San Francisco—3543 18th St. #17, S.F., CA 94110 (415) 561-9055
New York—POB 2512,Cadman Plaza, Brooklyn, NY 11202 (212) 243-0202